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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we lift our hearts to You, invoking Your blessings upon this day. Lord, You have made us one in our need of You, one in our yearning for strength beyond the self, and one in our quest for Your peace. Cleanse our hearts and open our minds that Your truth may enter our lives. Today, give our lawmakers the strength to do Your will. Help them to serve one another so that they may reflect Your spirit and goodness. Make them so aware of Your presence that they will learn Your wisdom.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 24, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JEANNE SHAHEEN, a Senator from the State of New Hampshire, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. SHAHEEN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, today following leader remarks, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 160, the DC Voting Rights legislation, with the time divided until 11 a.m. between the two leaders or their designees. The designation we have is, of course, Senator LIEBERMAN, the chairman of the committee. At 11 a.m. the Senate will proceed to a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to the bill.

The Senate will recess from 12:30 to 2:15 to allow for the weekly caucus luncheons. We will likely not have a vote on the nomination of SOLIS, a cloture vote. It is my understanding that Republicans have almost cleared it. They have one more Senator to hear from to set this up. So there will be a vote at 4:30 from the time after the caucus. We are waiting for a phone call. Staff is waiting for a phone call. So what we would do if, in fact, that is granted, we would work until 4:30 p.m. today on the Solis nomination. People can come and talk on that however they feel. At 4:30 we would have a vote on her confirmation.

Now, that vote will be completed shortly before 5 o'clock. Chairman LIEBERMAN will be the person who will be managing this bill. If people want to amend this, they have that right to do that. I have spoken at some length to the Republican leader. We have to get off this legislation as soon as we can, because a week from this Friday, March 6, the funding for the Govern-

ment runs out. So we have to pass the bill that will be coming from the House today, or at the latest tomorrow. We have to get that passed.

We have scheduled a "no-vote day" next Friday. We would like to keep that. If, however, we see that this appropriations bill is running into trouble, we are going to have to cancel that because we have to continue working on the legislation until we complete it. But there should be no problem in that regard.

I understand people want to offer amendments. That is fine. Let them offer amendments. But this bill has been around for a long time. It is now on the Web—people can look at it—as of last night. It has been around for a long time. We have had Republican input, both in the House and in the Senate. It has been scrubbed very closely. So I hope everyone would look at the legislation, determine what amendments they want to offer and recognize the deadline we have next Friday.

THE ECONOMY

Members of Congress and all Americans look forward to hearing from President Obama tonight in his first address in the House Chamber. After we passed as a Congress, and he signed, the economic recovery plan into law, the President can confidently tell the American people that we have begun filling with dirt the deep economic ditch he inherited. That is especially so with the announcement he made in Mesa, AZ last Wednesday about the housing crisis.

Throughout his campaign, and now the first weeks of his Presidency, President Obama has told it to us very straight. He has not sugar-coated anything. He has not sugar-coated the challenges we face or tried to paint a rosy picture of a rapid recovery.

He will surely call upon us to lend a hand, to put politics aside and continue working together, not as two parties but as one Congress for one country. In

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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